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Genealogies of Noble Families as a Database for Social Science? Possibilities and Limits

Christoph Franke^{*}

Abstract: »Adelsgenealogien als Datenquelle für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen? Möglichkeiten und Grenzen«. This paper examines the possibility of using genealogies of noble families as a source for social sciences, to analyse the social reality of noble families, during the transition from a class structured to a civil based society. Genealogies of noble families have been published since the 19th century, but they were stopped during the second world war. These publications were resumed in 1951. In these genealogies the following information of each person are published: Name and family name, date of birth and date of death. The same data, concerning the spouse, education, profession, information concerning an estate and membership in voluntary organisations was collated. The analysis of this mass data enables statements concerning the change of professions, to the number of marriages and to the mobility of marriage, to the number of children, to length of marriage and, to a certain extent, social participation. But there is a lack of data concerning the education, the professional career and the professions of the noble daughters. As an alternative source, there may be family histories, which were published for a number of families, which could be used. In this paper the differences, between family history and genealogies, will be presented in detail. Finally, with the help of a limited database, an exemplary inquiry can be made concerning the adaptation of the Saxon nobility to the norms of the civil society. In particular, the changes that have taken place in general and vocational education as well as the effects of the modified ways of vocational training on the occupation of the Saxon nobility during the 19th and 20th century will be analyzed.

Keywords: Process-Generated Data, Genealogy, Biographical Research, Life Course Analysis, Family Sociology, Social Structure, Elites, Hidden Populations.

1. Introduction

Since the end of the 18th century, nobility was experiencing a loss of importance due to an overall social change. Industrialisation had created new economic conditions and new fields of activity which were not accepted by the

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majority of the nobility. The principles of estates, namely the primary rules concerning noble births including a high degree of self-recruitment from the particular generations of sons, was increasingly pushed back. However, the decline of nobility in the 19th and 20th century indicates a constant importance of nobility as a social class in some areas of society. Although statistical tables are rarely found, one can assume that nobility is still overrepresented in diplomatic services and in the German armed forces, as measured by its overall importance. Also, in some economical sectors, especially in banks and insurance companies, nobility could hold onto a disproportional amount of leading positions; however, dominance in any particular professional group cannot be identified (Reif 2000: 7-9; Wehler 1987: 154-161; Wehler 1995: 167-179 and 805-825; Mosse 1988: 285-286; Press 1988: 17; Dornheim 1991: 142-156; Winter 1981: 130-178; Kruk 1966).

Nobility is statistically an elusive population, because there are no direct surveys relating to membership of noble classes. Even in censuses, the membership of nobility is not projected separately, making a collection and statistical analysis of this part of the population very difficult to attain. A solution to this lack of data collection could be on offer from the research in the form of genealogical records undertaken by noble families for many generations. For these families, this research has always been a natural part of the care of family history and personal memories.

2. Description of the Data Source

In 1765 the first volume of the *“Gotha’sche Hofkalender”* was published, providing genealogies of noble families to the public at large. During the 19th century, the princely families that were listed in the *“Hofkalender”* were divided into three groups: current sovereigns and their houses, other prosperous houses in Germany, France and Italy, as well as mediatised houses. Furthermore the genealogies of the gentry were published in the following four series in the 19th century: pocket books of the comital houses (from 1825), those of the baronial houses (from 1848), those of the ancient nobility (from 1900) and the genealogical pocket books of the younger nobility (from 1907). Here, the comital and baronial families had their genealogies published every second year whereas the untitled noble families aimed for a publication of their genealogies every fourth year (Fritsch 1968: 4-96, 111-121; Simmel 1908: 742). The *“Gotha’sche”* genealogical pocket books were published until 1942 when the publication had to be stopped due to a lack of paper.

In the period between the two World Wars, some parts of the German nobility supported and followed the ideology of National Socialism. As a result of the anti-Semitic radicalization of parts of the nobility, an anti-Jewish register was established in 1920/21: *“Das Eiserne Buch Deutschen Adels Deutscher Art”* (“The iron book of German nobility of German type”), abbreviated to *“Edda”*. The first

volume of the “*Edda*” was published in 1925. This work was mainly promoted by Baron Albrecht von Houwald (1866-1958), who had previously been an employee in the Prussian College of Arms. Houwald aimed at establishing a register that would only accept “pure-blooded” nobles, i.e. only those nobles who had no Jewish or coloured ancestors before 1750. Between 1925 and 1942 four volumes of the “*Edda*” were published. Since the publication of the “*Edda*”, those persons whose genealogical table was published in it were also marked with an “E” in the aforementioned “*Gotha*” (Malinowski 2003: 336-357; Fritsch 1968: 25).¹

2.1. Problem 1: Who is Noble and thus Included in the Gotha?

It was not possible to register all German-speaking nobility completely in the “*Gotha'sche*” books, as the registration of the Austrian noble families in the “*Gotha*” had different editorial specifications. This was explained with the so-called “systematised nobility” which allowed the conferment of nobility under certain conditions. This was especially the case after a long period of military service, particularly if the applicant participated in battles and had received high awards. This led to a sharp rise in the Austrian military nobility, a form of nobility that did not exist in Germany and therefore entry into the “*Gotha*” was denied to these families. Because of this, in the 19th and 20th century several attempts were made by Austria to register the Austro-Hungarian nobility genealogically (Frank-Dörfering 1989: 16; Fritsch 1968: 122.).

2.2. Problem 2: Different Time Spans Covered by Different Genealogies

In 1870 the first volume of the “Genealogical Pocket Book of Knights and Nobility” was released. Publishing 19 volumes until ceasing 1894 (See the introduction in the *Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Ritter- und Adels-Geschlechter* 1870). The year 1905 saw the first volume of a new series, the “*Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Adeligen Häuser Österreichs*” (“Genealogical Pocket Book of the Noble Houses of Austria”). This genealogical series had the aim to publish those genealogies which were not included in the “*Gotha'sche*” pocket books (*Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Adeligen Häuser Österreichs* 1905: III-VI.). Five volumes were published until 1912/13, later the production had to be stopped due to economic problems. In 1926 another attempt was made to register the Austrian nobility methodically; the “*Wiener Genealogisches Taschenbuch*” (“Viennese Genealogical Pocket Book”) initially aimed at Publishing the genealogies of all Austrian noble families. It planned to enlarge the circle of genealogies being published to include families from the

¹ About Baron Albrecht von Houwald see the article “Houwald, Albrecht Freiherr von” in: *Kleines ABC zum deutschen Adel*, <http://home.foni.net/adelsforschung/lex44.htm>.

other territories under rule by the Danube Monarchy (Wiener Genealogischen Taschenbuch 1926: III.). But even this third attempt was not realised due to difficult political circumstances created after the occupation of Austria by the German Empire.

Finally, other European countries that possessed or still have genealogic series should be noted, namely Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Spain and Hungary (Fritsch 1968: 175-185).

2.3. Problem 3: Underrepresentation of Women

In addition to that, the database does not fully include the female members of the family due to two factors:

- during the time frame being researched, very few daughters of the nobility independently pursued a certain profession or partook in a higher education. The time of economic depression during the Weimar Republic and the beginning of the Third Reich shows a small number of female family members who started a profession. It is only after the Second World War though, that the female occupation rate can be collected more adequately.
- Here, a short period of time is spent working in a profession, mostly in between their graduation and the birth of their first child. Due to the rather short period of time that was spent working, placing these women in the occupational hierarchy would leave a wrong image. In most cases no occupation is mentioned, which leads to the assumption that the majority of the women took on the responsibility of being a housewife and a mother. This kind of work plays a vital part in holding the family together, but cannot be taken into account for a social classification. For these reasons, I eventually decided not to include any women in my research (Janowitz 1958: 3).

2.4. Information covered by the Gotha'sche Pocket Books

In the Gotha'schen Genealogical paperbacks and in the various Austrian nobility manuals the following data for each person were published:

- first name and surname
- date of birth, death and marriage
- information about higher education
- information about all held occupational positions
- information about the ownership of the estates
- membership in honorary organizations, especially membership in the "*Malteser*" or "*Johanniter*" order.

In cases of spouses marrying into a family, the aforementioned data was described only briefly as it was possible to find the data in the family of origin. This was at least true for marriages within one's social class, and until the beginning of the 20th century the majority of noble matrimonyes were of this kind.

Extract of the Genealogical Compendium of Nobility

464	Rotsmann	Rotsmann	465
<p>Rotsmann</p> <p>Ev. — Oberhessisches Schöffengeschlecht, das die Stammreihe mit Sibold Rotzmul, Bürger in Fulda 1263, beginnt, dessen Enkel Konrad Rotzmul um 1330 in Alsfeld ansässig wird. Siegfried u. Albrecht Ratzmaul kommen 1361 aus Alsfeld nach Frankfurt am Main, wo das Geschlecht zum Patriziat und zum Hause Alten-Limpurg, der späteren adeligen Ganerbschaft, gehörte (dort 1439 erloschen). — Das Geschlecht gehört seit 1532 dem Stift Kaufungen der Althessischen Rrschaft an und erscheint 1545 zuerst mit dem Namen „Rotzmann“. Aufnahme als Burgmann der Reichsburg Friedberg 28. 7. 1755 (für Ludwig v. Rotzmann). — Ghzgl. hess. Bescheinigung der Berechtigung zur Führung d. Fhrtitels Darmstadt 27. 4. 1911 (für das Gesamtgeschlecht).</p> <p>W. (StW.): In B. der wächs. Rumpf eines alten här. Mannes in r. Kleid mit g. Rockkragen; auf dem H. mit b.-g. Decken die Schildfigur zw. offenem, von R. über B. get. Flügel.</p> <p>Vgl. Eduard Becker, Aus dem Archiv eines alten Alsfelder Adelsgeschlechts (Rotzmaul), in: Festschrift zur Siebenhundertjahr-Feier der Stadt Alsfeld, Alsfeld 1922, S. 127–136. — Ders., Das Archiv eines Alsfelder Patriziergeschlechts (Rotzmaul), in: Mitt. d. Orlens. GeschVer eins, Neue Folge, Bd 30 (1932), S. 129 bis 166. — Goth. fhrl. Tschb. 1854 bis 1936. — GHdA, Fhrl. Häuser B, Bd III (1963) (Stammreihe u. ältere Genealogie) u. VI (1976).</p> <p>Adolf Freiherr v. Rotsmann, * Darmstadt 7. 2. 1829, † ebd. 8. 4. 1907, auf Dotzelrod bei Alsfeld, Ghzgl. hess. Khr u. Oberstlt a. D.;</p> <p>× Hohenau bei Trebur 28. 11. 1857 Sophie Touchon, * Groß-Gerau 17. 4. 1833, † Darmstadt 22. 2. 1911, T. d. Pfarrers der franz. ref. Gemeinde in Hanau Emanuel T. auf Hohenau u. d. Henriette Schrimpf.</p> <p>1. Friedrich Maximilian, * Darmstadt 8. 9. 1858, † Dotzelrod 16. 4. 1931, Kgl. preuß. Oberstlt a. D.;</p>		<p>× Darmstadt 4. 5. 1889 Emilie Kraetzer, * Wien 11. 3. 1868, † Lüdinghausen 10. 11. 1953, T. d. K. K. Oltz i. R. Eduard K. u. d. Luise Frein v. Gager.</p> <p>Kinder:</p> <p>1) Eduard Maximilian Friedrich Adolf, * Darmstadt 2. 7. 1890, † Alsfeld 5. 2. 1972, Kpt. z. See a. D.;</p> <p>× Kiel 31. 7. 1915 Henriette-Helena Kalis, * Sliedrecht, Niederlde, 7. 2. 1896, † Alsfeld 30. 12. 1971, T. d. Unternehmers Wouter Pieter K. u. d. Jannigje de Jong.</p> <p>Söhne:</p> <p>(1) Eduard Maximilian Wouter, * Kiel 22. 12. 1916, × bei Rasdorskaja am Donez, Rußld, 25. 7. 1942, Hptm. im GrenRgt „Großdeutschland I“;</p> <p>× Stargard, Pomm., (standesamtl.) 8. 9., (kirchl.) 9. 9. 1939 Irmgard Frein v. Malapert gen. v. Neufville, * Braunfels an der Lahn 6. 2. 1917, T. d. Oberstlts a. D. Johannes Frhr v. M. gen. v. N. auf Gleichenstein, Kr. Mülhausen, u. d. Irmgard Erdmann (Schloß Stetten, 7118 Künzelsau).</p> <p>Töchter:</p> <p>a. Irene Jettie Irmgard, * Stargard 22. 9. 1940, Krankenschwester;</p> <p>× Wiesbaden (standesamtl.) 28. 4., (kirchl.) 29. 4. 1967 Klaus Stürzenberger, * Kissingen 30. 11. 1940, Dipl.-Ing., Dir. am Europ. Patentamt (Hans-Ehard-Str. 14, 8000 München 83).</p> <p>b. Edda Renate, * Darmstadt 16. 6. 1942, Dr. med., RegMedDir.;</p> <p>× Uffenheim, Mfranken, 27. 2. 1970 Rainer Lange, * Dresden 14. 5. 1943, OStudiendir. (Triesdorfer Str. 45, 8825 Triesdorf-Weidenbach).</p> <p>(2) Heinrich-Burkhard Jan Emil, * Kiel 3. 6. 1918, † Gießen 5. 6. 1990, BezLeiter i. R. der Deutschen Shell AG, Olt a. D., Ekr d. JohO.;</p> <p>× Oppin bei Halle an der Saale 2. 4. 1944 Anne-Kathrin v. Westernhagen, * Oppin 3. 6. 1923, T. d. Ldwirts Edel v. W. u. d. Wanda v. Zakrzewski (Haus Dotzelrod, 6320 Alsfeld 1 — Eudorf).</p>	

The tradition of the “Gotha” genealogical pocket books was continued after the Second World War by the “Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels” (“Genealogical Compendium of Nobility”), which has been published since 1951 and now has 145 volumes. Moreover a genealogical compendium of the Bavarian nobility was published. Here, those noble families are listed who are registered in the 1821 established Bavarian register for nobility. As of 2006 there were 26 volumes of this series published. Even nowadays it is common practice among the nobility to classify an individual into his or her familial and historic context using genealogical information about his or her origin. In contrast to the “Gotha’sche” pocket books, later editions of both the aforementioned books provided more detailed information about the women marrying into a family, including the occupation of the wife’s father. This turned out to be a precious supplement to the already existing information because this new data allowed conclusions to be drawn about the social position of the family of

the woman. In contrast to the “*Gotha'sche*” pocket books the families have to apply for a repetition of their genealogies and nowadays the families have to pay a contribution for the publication of their genealogy (€ 50,- per page) (Ehrenkrook 1951: IIX-XV; Franke 2004: 327-328. Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst 1950: 5-9).

2.5. Potential Research Questions

With the help of the genealogical paperbacks, one might be able to answer the following socio-scientific questions:

- *male inter-generational job mobility*, i.e. information about their progression, about their descent or their continuance in a certain hierarchy; compared with the occupation of the father
- *class homogamy of marriages*, i.e. endogamy or exogamy; was the marriage contracted with a noble or a non-noble spouse
- *fertility patterns*, i.e. data about the age at marriage and the number of children
- *data about the inter-generational matrimonial mobility of the husband*, i.e. endogamy and exogamy; progression or descent by marriage measured as accordance or difference between the occupations of the husband's and wife's respective fathers.
- *data about the inter-generational matrimonial mobility of the bride*, i.e. endogamy and exogamy; progression or descent by marriage measured as accordance or difference between the occupations of the husband's and wife's respective fathers.

2.6. Problem 4: Missing Data

Data about the scholastic and university education are mainly incomplete for both sexes; the *Gotha'sche* paperbacks abandon a listing of the women's education and occupational functions nearly completely, so that a social positioning of the women with the help of the data included in the genealogical manuals is hardly possible. It is not until the beginning of the 20th century that more information about the education and occupations of the female nobility is presented in the genealogical manuals. In addition, the reconstruction of the number of members of a family is rather difficult due to a specific criterion for the *Gotha'schen* pocket books or manuals, that state that a person who has been listed dead without living descendants, will be deleted.

2.7. Data Preparation

Currently, both genealogical handbooks serve as a register of evidence of belonging to the aristocracy. Historical or social sources for research are not the primary task of these publications. As a result of specific criterion of the publication,

members of a family are quickly deleted after their death, especially the females. For scientific research it is therefore necessary to obtain the various publications of a family as a basis to reconstruct all the members of that family. In order to be able to use a sufficient data stock for a longitudinal analysis about the social positions of all members of a noble family it is necessary to make use of historical family stories.

Within the extent of this research, only an intermediate result with limited significance could be achieved. So far, five Saxon families with a total of 222 individuals have been filed into an MS-access database.² At this point, there are no final results yet but rather sufficiently supported tendencies.

The families selected for this research belong to dynasties that have had their family records published, so that the database in these cases is mainly very advantageous. In the case of those individuals still alive today, however, the database turns out to be fragmented. In particular, information on the education level up to university of the spouses that have married into the families is rather incomplete. Consequently, it is impossible to present reliable results for this particular area of research.

2.8. Data used for Triangulation

Family histories were compiled by different noble families, especially since the 19th century. Those families who had lost their properties and their regional anchoring in the course of the Second World War frequently published family stories. In such cases, the family stories often function as a reflection of their noble self-conception; moreover they can remind the future generations of their noble traditions. During the second half of the 20th century the content of the family stories changed considerably. It was no longer characteristic to be a book of memories which shaped the family histories where the focus lay on the description of general historical processes and on the specific role of each individual, but it became the major task of contemporary family stories to adapt to the actual stage of research and to provide an update whenever corrections were made concerning genealogical information.³

One crucial problem that occurs when personal data is published in genealogical paperbacks or in family stories is that the data is made available by the

² The data of the following families were chosen: von Arnim with 24 people, von Böhlau with 29 people, von Heynitz with 96 people, von Schönfels with 67 people and the counts von Seebach with six people. The following publications were used in addition: Arnim 1957 and 2002; Pusch 1974; Heynitz 1968, 1970 and 1971; Schönfels, 1981. Biographical information concerning the Counts of Seebach were supplied to the author by Johann-Wilhelm von Seebach at the 3rd and 25th of July 2001.

³ The experience of loss is described in the introduction of the chronicle of the family von Preetzmann 2004 and in the work by Bill/von Heydebreck 2004: 7-12. An appeal to noble values and traditions is presented in Quistorp 2006: 2; Puttkamer 1984: IV-X.

same families or persons who are featured in these publications and this data has to be cleared according to the standards of German privacy legislation. The editorial team for the genealogical manuals calls for documented evidence in cases of uncertainty, but they still have to accept compromises in order to publish the manuals continuously, thus some facts are not always presented accurately. However, scientific research can minimize the resulting problems of falsified data by triangulating different sources. On the one hand, one has to determine if there is a family story for a certain family, then this family history could then be used as a further data source. Furthermore, one can find members of noble families mentioned in different biographical reference books, thus falsifications in the assessment can be avoided. Finally, I also want to point to new publications platform for genealogical and biographical data of noble families, because a number of these families publish information about members of their family on the internet. This information is easy to access and analyse.⁴

3. An Example

3.1. Research Question

In the following, results will be presented on the social structure of five Saxon noble families, based on the genealogical data drawn from *Gotha'sche* Genealogical Paperbacks, the Genealogical Paperbacks of the nobility and family records. The criterion for selecting the families being researched was whether or not one of the family members was delegated to the First Chamber of the Saxon regional parliament. Thus, the inclusion of traditional Saxon families in the analysis whose main income was derived from agricultural activities within their estate can be ensured. Besides the member of the Chamber and his siblings, all other descendants will be incorporated in the analysis during the time period being researched. Here, the later born sons are regarded as a special group. The principles of the feudal law stated that only those men able to perform military services, meaning the leudes of the territorial lord, could inherit the manor and consequently, a more privileged group among the nobility was created. Splitting the inheritance was out of the question. The later born sons each received the same portion of the estate's output. However, as most estates could not make enough profit to provide the living expenses for several noble families, the later born sons were given either money or a debenture bond taken from the heritage. The result of this arrangement resembled the "*fidei*" regulations: The later born sons had to look for other occupations in order to secure their living (Erler 1971: 1071-1073; Dietze 1926: 993-1006; Press 1988: 5, 10 and 12; Flugel 1996: 87-88.). By

⁴ A general survey about the Websites of noble families is provided at the homepage of Association of German Nobility <http://www.vdda.de/>.

doing so, they started competing with other population groups and at the same time had to face increasingly demanding performance rates. This situation leads to the question whether the later born sons turned to modern professions in the economical and industrial section faster and more effectively than the first-born sons. It should also be asked whether traditional noble occupations, e.g. military, diplomatic or administrative professions, existed and whether the nobility developed a predominant position in these professional areas in the 20th century as well. Moreover, the choice of occupation also had an effect on the education of the children: Is there any evidence of typical ways of education like being taught by a private teacher and later on entering a cadet school or do these ways of education rather conform to those of the civil society?

3.2. Results

The social status of the nobility in the 19th and 20th century was based on their property. The property as well as the economical means of existence had a great impact on the lifestyle and, going along with that, on the socialization of the future generation and their mentality. By the end of the 20th century, this particular way of thinking could still be found among the members of the nobility because “the non-existence of property,” as Horst W. von Rohr from Celle puts it in a letter to the editor in the *“Deutsche Adelsblatt”* in July 1999, “that was closely related to the ‘nobility’ will more and more estrange the noblemen from their aristocratic way of thinking and feeling. Moreover, marriages with non-aristocratic spouses will loosen these bonds more and more” (Letter to the editor by Horst W. v. Rohr 1999: 182).

Table 1: Property owned by the Saxon Noblemen

Years of birth	Total male noblemen	Total landlords	in %	Total without estate	in %
1761-1790	1	1	100,0	–	–
1791-1820	9	8	88,9	1	11,1
1821-1850	7	6	85,7	1	14,3
1851-1880	12	8	66,7	4	33,3
1881-1910	10	1	10,0	9	90,0
1911-1940	15	2	13,3	13	86,7
1941-1970	13	0	0,0	13	100,0

In the course of the 19th century, there was a drastic decline of aristocratic property. In fact, as a result of escape and displacement, the Saxon nobility had completely lost their ancestral family property after World War II, meaning that their position as the local ruling class was no longer existent (Vitzthum 1979: 4).

Table 2: Size of the Property

Years of birth	Size ¹ of the property in ha:					
	Less than 199		200-999		over 1.000	
	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB
1761-1790	–	–	–	–	–	–
1791-1820	1	–	1	6	–	–
1821-1850	–	1	2	2	1	–
1851-1880	1	1	3	1	1	1
1881-1910	–	–	1	–	–	–
1911-1940	–	–	1	–	–	–
1941-1970	–	–	–	–	–	–

FB: first-born sons. LB: later born sons.

¹ Classification of the size of the estates based on the estate statistics of 1885. See *Landwirtschaftliche Betriebsstatistik* (1885).

Due to the small amount of data, a specification in percentage would be adequate neither for this nor for the following tables. Rather, absolute figures were selected to depict the development.

Until the end of the 19th century, the Saxon nobility managed to obtain and cultivate rather large portions of land. The majority of first-born and later born sons owned estates within the range of 200 to 999 ha. Although they tried to cultivate bigger estates, the majority of the Saxon aristocratic families that are analyzed in this research still had to pursue a different occupation in order to pay for their daily living expenses. In the course of the 200 years that were analysed, the Saxon nobility lost their position as the social group that owned property. It was exactly this loss of property that inevitably had to lead to a reorientation of the nobility in the professional or working sectors.

From the beginning of the 19th century onwards, the break-up of the class society also had its effects on common education standards. Resulting from the economical and technical development, the A-levels slowly became the prerequisite not only for a higher education at university level, but also for a career as an officer. Since the Prussian educational edict in 1834, the graduation diploma was an indispensable requirement for being accepted at university as well as for starting a career in higher administration. Moreover, this career could only be pursued after having studied six semesters of either jurisprudence or political science. The prerequisite for becoming an officer in Prussia, however, was not as difficult to meet: the graduation certificate of the elementary educational level was sufficient (Wunder 1996: 257; Henning 1984: 74).

As a consequence of these more demanding and stricter conditions to attain a higher public or military position, the members of the nobility had to face the altered examination requirements just like any other applicant. This devel-

opment should have led to a higher motivation or a stronger effort to fulfil the educational conditions and, therefore, to keep higher positions in public administration and in the military. However, Marcus Funck and Stephan Malinowski, after having analysed 400 autobiographies and 50 records concerning the educational behaviour of the nobility in the 19th and early 20th century, came to a different result. According to their research, most members of noble families did not receive a thorough academic and professional education (Funck, Malinowski 2000: 71-91). If this statement can be regarded as universally valid for the nobility, a higher education of the aristocrats, meaning the A-levels and then going on to a university or an academy, would be an exception even among the Saxon nobility.

Nevertheless, it becomes evident that predominantly higher schools, especially the local grammar schools, were chosen as the place for academic achievements, starting in the middle of the 19th century. Whereas special schools, e.g. the aristocratic school *St. Afra* in Meißen, were still attended in the 19th century, they then completely vanished in the 20th century. The same is true for cadet schools that aimed at preparing students for their career as military officers.

The distinctions and differences between first-born and later born sons are not reflected in the choice of the schools they attended.

The most widely chosen educational background among the first-born sons of the Saxon nobility was the attendance of higher academic schools. Until the middle of the 19th century, it was also not uncommon for the families of the Saxon nobility being researched to have a private teacher for the education of their children at home. This scheme of education allowed the families a greater influence on the way of teaching and, more importantly, on the socialization of the next generation. Following this period of their education the sons went to cadet schools, which served to prepare them for their military service. By the middle of the 19th century, grammar schools had become the most commonly selected type of school that ensured the acceptance to further studies at university level.

Based on the recent range of data concerning the Saxon nobility during the time being researched, the results laid out by Funck and Malinowski cannot be verified. The majority of the first-born and later born sons could very well attend higher academic schools leading to the A-levels as their graduation diploma. Methods of education that used to be typical for the nobility, like having a private teacher or attending a cadet school, completely disappeared. A significant amount of the first-born sons chose Political Science instead of Agriculture and Forestry as their major even though the latter subjects would have been more beneficial or advantageous for the administration of an estate. The later born sons, however, headed into yet another direction by predominantly studying medical, technical and also humanity sciences. Having a university education gained more and more importance as a basic professional

qualification and can thus be regarded as a direct reaction to the increasing demands of the civil society (For similar developments among the nobility in Pomerania see Buchsteiner 1999: 359-363).

Table 3: Education of the Noble Sons

Years of birth	Total attendance	Thereof: grammar school	Aristocratic schools	Grammar school/Aristocratic schools	Cadet school	Private teacher	Other schools ¹
1761-1790	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1791-1820	7	2	1	2	1	2	–
1821-1850	6	3	1	3		3	–
1851-1880	8	7	–	1	1	–	–
1881-1910	6	5	–	1	1	2	–
1911-1940	6	6	–	–	–	–	–
1941-1970	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Multiple entries possible.

¹ including *Real- and Hauptschulen*.

Table 4: School Attendance of First-born and Later Born Sons of the Saxon Nobility

Years of birth	Total attendance		Thereof: Grammar schools		Aristocratic schools		Grammar school/Aristocratic schools		Cadet schools		Private teacher		Other schools ¹	
	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB
1761-1790	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1791-1820	2	5	–	2	1	1	1	–	–	1	–	2	–	–
1821-1850	3	3	1	2	–	1	2	1	–		2	1	–	–
1851-1880	6	3	6	1	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	–
1881-1910	3	3	2	3	–	–	1	–	–	1	1	1	–	–
1911-1940	1	5	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1941-1970	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

FB: first-born sons. LB: later born sons. Multiple entries possible.

¹ including *Real- und Hauptschulen*.

Table 5: University Studies of Noble Sons

Years of birth	Total of students	Students with a degree				
		State Exam (Law)	Masters/ State Exam	Bachelor (University & FH)	Doctorate & Post-doctorate	Without degree
1761-1790	–	–	–	–	–	–
1791-1820	6	3	–	1	–	2
1821-1850	3	1	–	1	–	1
1851-1880	4	2	–	1	1	1
1881-1910	5	2	–	3	2	–
1911-1940	7	2	–	2	1	2
1941-1970	4	1	2	1	–	–

Table 6: Offices and Occupation of the Sons of the Nobility (Apart from Owning Property)

Years of birth	1791 – 1820	1821 – 1850	1851 – 1880	1881 – 1910	1911 – 1940	1941 – 1970
Offices and Occupations in:						
Military	–	3	4	5	–	5
Administration, Civil Service	–	1	1	–	–	1
Court	1	2	1	–	–	–
Politics	6	1	–	–	–	–
Diplomacy	1	1	–	–	–	–
Church, Counseling	–	–	–	–	–	–
Medical Sector	–	–	–	–	–	1
Service Sector ¹	–	–	1	–	–	2
Technical Sector, Engineers	–	–	–	2	–	2
Teachers, Professors, Scientific Sector	–	–	–	–	–	–
Secretarial and Organisational Sector	1	1	2	1	–	–

¹ including self-employment, excluding doctors

Professions played an important role in determining the social position of an individual. An occupation is based on a variety of gifts and talent, which make up the foundation of each individual's professional performance. Moreover, the

occupational status of a person not only determines his or her chance to make a living but also the place in his or her social environment (Daheim et al. 1972: 11-21). As for the nobility, having a profession was regarded as being rather secondary since the main source of income should actually be the property. However, as the property of the Saxon nobility, as well as in other regions of Germany diminished and eventually vanished after World War II, the need for a profession to earn living expenses was seen (Reif 1999: 9-15; Wienfort 2006: 62-87).

Table 7: Offices and Occupation of the First-born and Later Born Sons
(Apart from Owning Property)

Years of birth	1791 – 1820		1821 – 1850		1851 – 1880		1881 – 1910		1911 – 1940		1941 – 1970	
Offices and Occupations in:	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB
Military	–	–	1	1	1	3	4	–	1	3	–	–
Administration, Civil Services	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Court	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Politics	1	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Diplomacy	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Church, Counselling	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Medical Sector	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Service Sector	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	–	2
Technical Sector, Engineers	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	1
Teachers, Professors, Scientific Sector	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	1	1
Secretarial and Organisational Sector	–	2	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–

FB: first-born sons. LB: later born sons

Until the middle of the 20th century, the majority of the Saxon nobility chose an occupation in the military sector as their professional career. This vocational choice mainly derives from a noble tradition that regarded the military or armed services not as an occupation but rather as a way of living. Another explanation for the prestige of being a military officer can be found in the costs for its professional training: around the year 1900, one had to pay about 6.000 Deutschmark (DM) while a university education in administration cost as

much as 25.000 DM, if the son did not live with his parents. In the case of his staying at home, the expenses could still go up to 12.000 DM (Wienfort 2006: 98-104; Reif 1999: 19-25; Ritter, Kocka 1974: 230). The competition with members of the middle class over higher positions in administration turned out to be a lot harder than over positions as a military officer. Those members of the middle class who had an academic education in particular, were trying to pursue a career in higher administration (Reif 1999: 17-19; Wienfort 2006: 88-98).

A career in the military sector was the predominantly chosen occupation among the first-born and later born sons of the Saxon nobility. This development was brought forward by multiple factors: In some cases, the military profession was merely a temporary solution until the acceptance of the heritage. So, for the first-born sons, this occupation only represented a transitional period that ended with their acquiring the leading position at the family estate. The later born sons, on the other hand, who were exempt from the heritage, lived off the occupation as an officer as their main source of income. The relative freedom of each commander of a regiment who had to decide on the acceptance of the applicants to a military career and the comparatively low costs and demands of the training – in Prussia, the graduation certificate of the elementary education level was the only prerequisite to enter a military career – led to a preference for the occupation as an officer among the nobility (Demeter 1964: 84-85; 87-88). However, by the end of the 19th century, an increasing number of noble sons pursued a career in the service sector (including self-employment), as engineers, teachers and in other scientific occupations. Working in formerly middle-class professions in the industrial sector and in self-employed academic professions was first possible after long and intense discussions among the nobility in the course of the 19th century (Hoyningen-Huene 1992: 89-91, 360-378). Eventually, from the birth cohort of 1942 onward, a predominance of one particular profession as in former times is no longer existent. The transforming economical and social conditions somewhat forced the nobility to adapt to these changes by practicing new, formerly middle-class trades (Kopp-Colomb 1997: 343).

In order to properly assess the question on whether or not the nobility could still be regarded as a social elite, the professions were put in a hierarchical order. Here, three different categories were applied:

- The category “*Top Position*” includes all jobs dealing with leading administrations (diplomats, ministers, secretaries of state, principles, presidents), business companies (large scale entrepreneurs as well as the management of big industrial enterprises), the military (generals) and the church.
- Under “*Leading Positions*” one can find the industrial entrepreneurs, the self-employed academics, the military officers (field officer, captains,

lieutenants), the academic civil servants as well as the (academic) employees in a leading position.

- The stage called "*Positions Bound to Instructions*" covers all non-academic civil servants and employees, middle-class entrepreneurs, merchants, craftsmen and sergeants.

A fourth category would have to include *workmen* (technicians, salesmen, skilled workers), agricultural workers, military crew ranks as well as lower civil servants and employees, but was left out because of a lack of entries.⁵ The assignment to the different groups was based on the highest professional occupation.

Until the first decade of the 20th century, the first-born sons of the Saxon nobility managed to keep their top positions in administrations, politics and diplomacy. This rather privileged position was a direct result of the political involvement in the First Chamber of the Saxon regional parliament. Top positions in other areas of administration or diplomatic services could not be achieved during the period of time being researched. The majority of the first-born sons held leading positions. So, they were part of the academic civil servants and (academic) employees in leading positions. The increase of professional involvement in the service and organisational sector also becomes apparent for the group of first-born sons. Here, self-employed occupations, especially those of a lawyer or a doctor, were primarily chosen. The database, however, does not give any indication of a tendency towards new trades, like the technical sector.

The later born sons, on the other hand, did not focus on a top occupation in the political sector anymore. They rather managed to achieve privileged positions in the military and as employed entrepreneurs. Parallel to the development among first-born sons, a majority of the later-born sons could fill leading positions especially in the military. A greater tendency towards the technical sector among the later born sons, however, starkly contrasts with the progress of the first-born sons (Winter 1981: 182-186).

The evaluation and the comparison of biographical information on five Saxon families with a total of 222 people who were born between 1761 and 1970 revealed considerable differences concerning their adaptation to the crucially transforming social environment of the 19th and 20th century. Even

⁵ Starting point for the categorization were the groups of different careers within the sector of civil services. This sector already regarded an academic education as the crucial criterion for a promotion to the official board at the beginning of the 19th century. Proper science and education were the key words for the so-called middle-class century that also permeated the sector of civil services. The introduction of the principle of performance carried on into the 20th century. Depending on their level of education, civil servants today are grouped into so-called simple, middle, raised and higher services. For information on the development of these different groups of careers see Hattenhauer 1980: 255-264. For information on the groups of careers nowadays see Wind et al. 1991: 95-103.

though the database is too limited in order to draw general conclusions from it, it can be stated that the property of the Saxon nobility has completely vanished. The first-born sons were the ones who showed the most “noble” behaviour considering their professional or marital choices. Even at the end of the time period being researched, one could still, although limited, find noble connubiality among this group. As for professional careers, some of the first-born sons managed to achieve a rather privileged social position due to their political involvement in the Saxon regional parliament. In other areas, however, like the trade or industrial sector, there was no exceptional performance. While the first-born sons of the Saxon nobility managed to hold numerous leading positions, they rarely achieved a top position. More advanced trades, especially in the technical sector, were pursued only with hesitation.

Among the later born sons of the Saxon nobility, the number who worked their way up to a top position in society was even lower than among the first-born sons. Until the middle of the 19th century, they still managed to hold privileged positions but after that, entries of this kind decline more and more. The majority of the later born sons tended to take on leading positions. Moreover, there is a greater diversity of occupations in the various professional sectors. It is not until the 20th century, though, that a tendency towards modern professions in the industrial, trade, technical or service sector becomes apparent. The nobility held on to traditional occupations in the military and partly in administration. Neither in administration nor in the modern trades did the nobility manage to achieve top positions. So, playing the role of an elite gradually became obsolete, since other groups in society could take the place of the nobility. In the 20th century, a functional elite can at best be found in some smaller areas.

Besides the analysis of the social mobility that was evaluated based on a membership to professionally and socially defined groups, the data, which is contained in the Gotha'sche Genealogical Paperbacks and the Genealogical Compendium of the Nobility, offers a multitude of other analytical possibilities. Here, information on the amount of first marriages and possibly successive marital bonds with regard to a certain connubial mentality should be mentioned. Can one still refer to the group of the nobility as a closed circle of marital bonds or do these circles open up towards other social groups? Data like this can be elaborated and analysed for various German territories and with regards to different noble ranks. The possibilities of evaluation are complemented by data taken from the family histories of different noble families that is very detailed and thorough. Approximately 4.000 of these family histories have already been published. Based on this data, more exact information on female members of the nobility can be extracted, which renders appealing for future research respectively in the area of long-term historical studies on gender issues.

Table 8: Professional Success of First-born and Later Born Sons of the Saxon Nobility (Apart from Owning Property)

Top positions in:										
Years of birth	Administration, Politics, Diplomacy, Civil Service ¹		Military		Service, Organisational and Secretarial Sector ²		Technical Sector, Engineers		Church, Counselling	
	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB
1761-1790	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
1791-1820	1	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1821-1850	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
1851-1880	2	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
1881-1910	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
1911-1940	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1941-1970	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Leading positions in:										
Years of birth	Administration, Politics, Diplomacy, Civil Service ¹		Military		Service, Organisational and Secretarial Sector ²		Technical Sector, Engineers		Church, Counselling	
	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB
1761-1790	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1791-1820	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1821-1850	3	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
1851-1880	–	–	1	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
1881-1910	–	1	3	2	1	–	–	–	–	–
1911-1940	–	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	–	–
1941-1970	2	1	–	–	1	1	–	1	–	–
Positions bound to instruction in:										
Years of birth	Administration, Politics, Diplomacy, Civil Service ¹		Military		Service, Organisational and Secretarial Sector ²		Technical Sector, Engineers		Church, Counselling	
	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB	FB	LB
1761-1790	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1791-1820	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1821-1850	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1851-1880	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
1881-1910	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1911-1940	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
1941-1970	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

¹ including teachers, professors, scientific professions.

² including medical sector, self-employed.

FB: first-born sons. LB: later born sons.

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